THE Reconstructionist

Vol. X. January 12, 1945 Tebet 27, 5705 No. 18

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REALITIES AND VALUES

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

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From a Canadian reader:

I want to tell you how much I enjoy reading your publication. You are to be commended for compiling the wealth of material and information on Jewish life that appears in your publication.

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From a U.S.O. worker just returned from overseas:

. . . . You must be with the boys overseas to understand how they wait for Jewish news and how avidly they read the Reconstructionist literature. They are extremely responsive to the program and philosophy of your movement.

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

ARMOND E. COHEN is Rabbi of the Cleveland Jewish Center, Cleveland, Ohio.

MORDECAI L. BRILL is a chaplain in the United States Army.

WITH ALL DUE MODESTY

From an officer in the U. S. Army:

Having been in the army for more thas two years, it was with hardly any consciousness at all that I began to drift away from Jews and Judaism. It was, therefore, refreshing to read *The Meaning of Reconstructionism* which is both intellectually stimulating and practical in its point of view. If the program outlined so broadly in the pamphlet is as good in its detail it has my wholehearted support.

▼

From a Jewish soldier in Germany:

Coming upon the November issue of the *Reconstructionist News* was indeed a refreshing moment in the months of battle. Now I know that one can rest assured in the fact that Reconstructionism is no mere theorizing . . . but a concrete endeavor to raise the morale of a suffering people badly in need of a banner and a rallying cry. . . . We young Jews are sorely in need of a conviction, a *raison d'etre*. I see it everyday. . . .

▼

From a Jewish soldier in Belgium:

One must be away from home to understand what receiving mail means. Receiving the Reconstructionist and the pamphlets which you sent me was just as personal a message. It brought to me the knowledge that you both understand what we seek and are doing your best to assure that we find it both here and at home. Please keep sending your literature! We have found no substitute for it.

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EDITORIALS

THE END OF THE ZIONIST DUUMVIRATE

DUUMVIRATES are rarely stable forms of government, particularly when each of the duumvirs is a strong personality. Nevertheless, we had cherished the hope, in view of the notable achievements of the Zionist Emergency Council under the joint leadership of Dr. Stephen S. Wise and Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, that that particular duumvirate would keep together at least for "the duration." It appears, however, that the tensions consequent upon the frustration of our efforts to have Congress pass the Commonweatlh Resolution have destroyed that hope. At the latest meeting of the Emergency Council, the resignation of Dr. Silver from the co-chairmanship was accepted and Dr. Wise elected sole chairman. Whatever our opinion may be on the relative merits of the claims of Dr. Silver and Dr. Wise to leadership, the decision of the Emergency Council must be accepted as final, the rift created by the issue must be healed, and the democratically elected administration must be given wholehearted and energetic support.

This should not be as difficult as might appear on the surface in view of the heat engendered by the controversy. That controversy did not, after all, turn upon principles but upon methods. Dr. Wise, no less than Dr. Silver, stands for the implementation of the Commonwealth program adopted at the Biltmore Conference. He differed from Dr. Silver in respect to the strategy to be used in influencing the government in favor of the Commonwealth program. Dr. Silver was for winning over Congress as the legislative branch of our government and for having it bring the pressure of public opinion to bear on the executive branch, particularly on the President and the State Department. Dr. Wise, on the other hand, felt that a resolution by Congress could be effective only if its timing, as well as its purport, was approved in advance by the President and the State Department, on whom, in any case, the implementation of the Resolution would depend. A good case can be made out for either policy. The Emergency Council has decided in favor of the latter and has elected to the chairmanship Dr. Wise, its chief exponent.

This removes Dr. Silver from a share in the chairmanship of the Council, but it in no way alters his claim to the gratitude and admiration of all Zionists. Al-

though the rejection of his policy was doubtless a sad disappointment to him, he has set an example of disciplined loyalty in retaining his seat in the Emergency Council, where he will continue to put his distinguished personal abilities at the disposal of the cause. We hope that all who supported him will do likewise.

That applies to the Mizrachi Organization which, in a statement issued by it after the election of Dr. Wise, declared: "Mizrachi registers herewith its intention to align with all forces in Zionism that are seeking the opportunity of recreating a front for aggressive Zionism, though it does not as yet choose to officially withdraw from the American Zionist Emergency Council." That "as yet" is ominous. This is a time for rallying all our forces; and secession, or the threat of secession, is intolerable. We trust that, as the excitement of the controversy dies down, Mizrachi will remain true to the impulse that has prompted it until now to remain in the organization, and will find opportunities to influence policy within the Council. Any withdrawal or talk of withdrawal at the present time can only give aid and comfort to the enemy.

Loyal Zionists will do all in their power to further the success of the present administration, even though they may be critical of it. After all, the blocking of the Commonwealth Resolution in the Senate by the action of the State Department renders imperative a shift of emphasis from winning over Congress to winning over the President and the State Department to a prompt implementation of what the President has turned the "traditional American policy" with reference to Palestine. There is no reason for assuming that the State Department's opposition to the present passage of the Resolution means a repudiation of that policy. Just what it does mean, we do not know. Perhaps it means that the State Department feels that the public agitation of the issue in Congress might impede rather than facilitate the necessary international negotiations. Perhaps, in its judgment, Jewish claims would stand a better chance of a favorable hearing, if urged after other matters in controversy between the United States and Great Britain have been disposed of. It is now up to the present leadership of the Emergency Committee to find out exactly what is in the mind of the President and the State Department and to influence their mind in the direction of the earliest possible fulfilment of the purpose to establish the Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine. All true Zionists will wish the administration success in those efforts and will do their utmost to speed that success.

Toward that end the achievements attributable to Dr. Silver's leadership must continue to play their part. There is no denying that, from the time that he took hold of affairs, every Zionist organization and every Zionist District was made more deeply conscious than ever before of the need to create, in the American community, a climate of opinion favorable to Zionism. The instrumentalities created for that work must continue to function. Their activity must go on unchecked and, if possible, be accelerated. The critical controversy has been resolved; there must be no further recriminations; the deck must now be cleared for united action.

HANUKKAH AND CHRISTMAS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HANUKKAH and Christmas were celebrated side by side recently in the University Settlement, in New York, and in several of the more progressive schools. The newspapers

gave the incident considerable notice, and rightly so, for it represents a most significant development in inter-cultural education and mutual understanding. For the sake of the record, it should be recalled that, for the past several years, similar joint celebrations have been conducted in other cities, in St. Paul and Minneapolis for example. But for all practical purposes, the experiment is still "news."

Should Jews look with favor upon it? Is it calculated to make for a fuller realization of democracy? To be sure, from the purely theoretical viewpoint, the introduction of religious observances into the public schools violates the principle of the separation of church and state. The question may therefore well be asked: if the celebration of Christmas, Hanukkah, or both is encouraged, will the teachers not want to go on from there and make religion a regularly scheduled subject, and will not the opportunity for such moves jeopardize our democratic structure?

No matter how clear the theoretic basis of the separation of church and state may be, or even how scrupulous our schools and courts may be in implementing that theory, the realistic truth is that Christmas has become inextricably interwoven into the pattern of our calendar year. Vacations are planned to include Christmas; the municipalities, the states and the federal government recognize it officially; in brief, Christmas has become one of the *mores* of American civilization. In various areas of American life it has assumed different forms and emphases. In the commercial world, it is the season of gifts and bonuses; in the churches, it has remained a sacred season, associated with the birth of him whom Christians believe to have been the Messiah; in many schools, colleges and homes it has become symbolic of good will, brotherhood, peace, and the blessed innocence of the child. But in one form or another, Christmas is here to stay.

Now, any serious and concerted effort to uproot its observance from the public schools will not only fail, but will incur the resentment of the overwhelming majority of Americans. What alternatives are there? The first is to leave matters stand as they are. This is obviously not fair to Jewish parents whose children are being indoctrinated in a faith alien to them. To permit the *status quo* would be to give Christianity a monopoly in our public schools. The second alternative is to have the children observe those festivals which their families and their communities cherish, and let the children present their own traditions to one another.

This alternative is clearly preferable. It would apply not only to Christmas and Hanukkah generally, but also to the various folk expressions of holidays deriving from the various nationalities represented on the American scene. This would apply, for example, to the Chinese New Year, wherever there are sufficient Chinese children to demonstrate their national customs. In this way, the democratic principles would operate not to throttle differences, but to enable various groups to express themselves culturally, without granting a monopoly of cultural expression to a particular one.

How would this affect group relations? Inter-cultural relations are bound to improve as children, under the auspices which they respect most heartily, are encouraged to be themselves and to understand one another.

How would this affect Judaism? Is there not a danger of syncretism, that is, of a merging of Judaism and Christianity, as the two religions meet and influence one another? Yes, there is such a danger. Already one hears of the Hanukkah tree, a Christmas tree with a Bethlehem

star-of-David on top; already one hears of Hanukkah parties postponed to the 25th of December, no matter when the 25th of Kislev falls. Yes, there is even the danger that Hanukkah may be poorly presented, distorted, or vulgarized.

These dangers can be met successfully and obviated if our religious and educational institutions stop fighting this development, and begin supervising the Jewish aspects of it. The public schools will certainly welcome the expert guidance of rabbis and Jewish teachers and educators, so that the Jewish portion of an assembly program may be authentic and beautiful. And as soon as authoritative Jewish leaders cooperate, these dangers will dwindle. Another question: Will not the children then feel that they can get all the Jewish education they need in the Jewish celebrations at the public schools? We believe they will not. Those children who attend Jewish schools will at once spring to positions of leadership in the public schools by virtue of their additional Jewish knowledge gained in the Hebrew schools. They will be given leading parts; they will be chosen to speak for the Jewish group. The truth is that the prestige of a Jewish education will soar when Jewish children come to see that it is an asset in the general world.

We, therefore, welcome the recognition of Jewish festivals in the schools, and urge that it become widespread — on condition that our rabbis and educators play their proper role in this intercultural education.

DEMOCRACY IS INDIVISIBLE

THE Pope's message to the Christian world on the occasion of its recent observance of Christmas is an interesting illustration of the kind of thinking responsible for much confusion in the minds of contemporary men. The newspapers, in their usual sensational manner, pointed up the Pope's faith in "democracy," and his plea for a new world order. This message deserves a somewhat closer analysis.

What led the newspapers to acclaim the Pope's accolade to democracy was that portion of his speech in which he made a valid and important point. He called attention to the significant distinction between governments that presume to speak in the name of the masses, and those which are truly democratic. It is, of course, common knowledge, by now, that the fascist and totalitarian governments always prided themselves upon the "fact" that they were the most democratic governments in the world, because they came into power as a result of a broad and deep upsurge of mass revolt against previous regimes. People must beware, however, said the Pope, lest they confuse those governments with governments which are in reality an expression of the will of the people. Totalitarian governments are organized mob-rule; and the masses they "represent" are the blind, ignorant crowds who have no minds of their own, and who, therefore, abdicate their sovereignty in favor of a leader no more moral than themselves. A true democracy is governed by men who are chosen by an enlightened citizenry, a people with discernment and understanding, whose members are free, through knowledge, to place in office those best qualified to serve the entire nation.

With this distinction, and with the Pope's emphasis upon it, we are entirely in accord. But the Pope usually goes on from there to make another distinction in which we cannot concur, namely, the distinction between the democracy which he hails in matters relating to governments, and the authoritarianism which he espouses in matters relating to the moral

order. This additional distinction neutralizes all the value contained in the first, for the Church demands implicit obedience and unquestioning adherence of its millions of members, to a system of salvation which includes within its purview special and detailed forms of political, economic, social and cultural behavior. This is the crux of a profound inconsistency. One must believe in democracy—and all its implications—as the true way of life, in every phase of life, or one does not believe in it at all. There is an inherent contradiction between authoritarianism and democracy. True democracy is indivisible.

In the light of this principle one must judge the Pope's protestations of love for democracy. In the light of this principle, one must judge the glowing terms in which he spoke of Franco Spain, which today remains one of Hitler's most valued allies, *de facto* if not *de jure;* one must judge the absence of words of condemnation for the totalitarianism which plunged the world into bloodshed; one must judge the Pope's emphasis upon the plea for a merciful settlement after the war.

But it is equally true that, in the light of this principle, one must judge the so-called democracies. If they are not prepared to make of democracy a working faith, a religion worth living for and dying for, they will be guilty of taking the name of democracy in vain. They must extend the meaning of democracy from the narrow political sense in which it is now being used, to that wider sense which would include economic, social and cultural life. The failure of democratic leaders to do so would result in the masses' again throwing themselves into the arms of those who prate of democracy, but who mean authoritarianism. In that respect, the Pope's message is a challenge to democrats everywhere.

AN ETHICAL PROBLEM FOR THE JEWISH PRESS

PRACTICALLY the entire Jewish press, our own magazine included, has carried the urgent request of the National Community Relations Advisory Council that civilians refrain from visiting certain winter resorts in which the War Department has set up rehabilitation and rest centers for servicemen. The appeal of the Council was, in most instances, backed up by editorial comment showing how important it is for the Jewish public in particular to heed that request.

But there is a striking disparity between what these papers say in their editorial sections and feature articles and what their advertising columns urge. Miami Beach, Fla., is listed first among the resorts to be avoided by civilians so that the sick and wounded service men may enjoy, along with the favorable climate of the resort, the rest and quiet that they need. But Miami Beach also heads the roster of the resorts which, through advertisements in the press, including the Jewish press, invite civilians to spend their winter vacations in its hotels.

It only aggravates our chagrin at the way the advertising columns undo the good work of the editorial writers, when we find that many of the hotels publicize the fact that their cuisine is *strictly kosher.* We should like to see the pious observance of *kashrut* associated with *derekh eretz,* with regard for the proprieties of the situation. When, behind a religious facade, there is concealed an appeal to selfish interest and a disregard for the welfare of others, the result is a *hillul hashem,* a sacrilege that reflects dishonor on Judaism and the Jews.

We do not want to be too hard on the newspapers and periodicals that carry these advertisements. In accordance with

Hillel's injunction, not to judge our neighbor until we stand in his place, we are disqualified from passing judgment. For *The Reconstructionist* does not depend on advertisers nor solicit advertisements. The ethical problem involved is not limited to the particular question that has brought the issue to our attention, nor is it confined to the *Jewish* press. It is inherent in the whole relationship of advertising to public welfare in general and to the press, as a quasi-public institution, in particular.

But we are concerned with this problem all the more, because we value the Jewish press as something more than a private enterprise for individual profit. It is an educational institution, an indispensable organ of a thriving Jewish community life. Nothing so thwarts the success of any educational movement as a contradiction between theory and practice. All solemn exhortations and unctuous appeals to goodwill on the part of preachers, teachers, writers and other leaders of popular opinion are doomed to failure unless the sincerity and unselfish intention of their efforts are beyond suspicion. We, therefore, call to the attention of Jewish editors the need of reexamining the common practice in respect to accepting advertising material, with a view to raising the ethical standards of Jewish journalism. Not long ago a conference of Jewish editors was held for the discussion of matters of common professional interest. We recommend that, at the next conference of this kind, the problem of the ethics of advertising as it affects the Jewish press in particular be put on the agenda.

REALITIES AND VALUES

IN CERTAIN LIBERAL CIRCLES, the idea of Palestine as a Jewish Commonwealth is opposed on the ground that it would involve an infringement on the rights of non-Jews in that country. General assurances by Zionists that no such encroachments are contemplated have not satisfied them. They should, however, have their misgivings completely set at rest by the official statement recently issued by Dr. Leo Kohn, political secretary of the Jewish Agency. Replying to an inquiry by a non-Jewish resident of Transjordania, he stated that, in the Jewish Commonwealth, Jews and non-Jews would be "subject to identical laws administered by a democratically elected goverment"; that there would be local self-government for urban and rural areas; that Moslem and Christian communities would enjoy full religious, educational and social autonomy; that there would be no discrimination on grounds of race or religion, in regard to the suffrage, representation in legislative and executive bodies and public employment; that religious rights of non-Jewish residents, visitors and pilgrims would be constitutionally guaranteed, the Moslem and Christian holy places would be administered by their respective religious bodies, and Moslem and Christian religious courts would retain their present jurisdiction; and that, furthermore, "the Jewish Commonwealth will endeavor to bring about an increasing measure of real equality in education and standards of life by social legislation and economic development."

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AT A TIME WHEN SO MUCH of our civilization is being ruthlessly destroyed, it is heartening to see the uninterrupted and even accelerated development of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Every crisis and challenge brings out new constructive forces which are evident in the assumption of additional educational tasks. The University is at the same time the custodian of the values accumulated in the long past of our people and the laboratory in which new

values are tested and developed. Along with accounts of archaeological excavations of ancient sites conducted by the university and the preparation, under its auspices, of a standard text of the Hebrew Bible, we read of its conferring the degree of Master of Agriculture on twenty candidates from its School of Agriculture, and of the endowment, by the Histadrut, Palestine's Federation of Labor, of a chair at the University for the study of the world labor movement. The chair will be appropriately named after the late Berl Katznelson, an outstanding leader of Palestine labor.

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THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY Relations Advisory Council took a wise step in its recent meeting in New York. A resolution was passed in which the national organizations associated with the NCRAC agree to consult the local agency in a locality in which activities are contemplated. In the event of a conflict, the the NCRAC will decide. Once again, the issue between the national organizations, and the local communities has come up; this time, the local communities have scored a definite advance. Unfortunately, however, there are only eighteen local agencies in the NCRAC. Their number should increase. Incidentally, there is no valid reason why the Union of American Hebrew Congregations should be the only national religious body represented. Either the Synagogue Council as a whole should have its delegates, or each national religious body should be represented separately. The present set-up is obviously inadequate.

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DO PRIVATE PARTIES HAVE THE right to draw contracts in which race restrictions are included? According to a representative of the Catholic Interracial Council, the U. S. Supreme Court is likely, during 1945, to extend its ruling against "race restriction covenants" to private covenants as well. Heretofore the highest court has ruled against municipalities entering into such covenants. The Catholic Interracial Council is planning to advocate this extension. Surely, if such covenants are declared unconstitutional, an important step forward will have been taken to assure all minorities their full rights—and even the majority will be protected.

Wanted — A Study of Jewish Middletown

By MORDECAI L. BRILL

Dr. Ismar Elbogen in his recently published "A Century of Jewish Life," has the following to say about the disintegration of Jewish life in America:

"Many who regard themselves as enlightened are quite remote from enlightenment; they are merely at the stage at which Judaism seems to them not fashionable. . . . In large cities the evil is lessened by the dynamic of the masses and by the work of community centers and similar institutions, but in smaller communities the effects of isolation are devastating. In Europe the small communities were the mainstay of conservation, a reservoir to maintain the level reduced by the leveling force of the large cities; but in the United States the process of leveling down *begins* (italics ours) in the small cities, where each individual synagogue officer is a sovereign power and is vigilant to see that Judaism does not

display too much activity. To a large extent it is the Christian Churches that expect certain co-operation from the rabbi; the Jews in his community would scarcely urge him to greater activity. They are largely without understanding of the significance of religion and historical consciousness" (page 578-9).

We assume that Dr. Elbogen is speaking of Jewish communities with a population of 2,000 Jews or less. A recent statistical survey by Dr. H. S. Linfield (Vol. 44, American Jewish Year Book, pages 419-21) shows that there are 200 communities in America with a population of 500 to 2,000 Jews and 374 communities with a population of 100-500. Roughly, this would be communities ranging from 25 to 500 Jewish families.

My own impression inclines me to disagree with Dr. Elbogen and to say that, just as the small communities in Europe were the mainstay of conservation, so too, the small communities in the United States. Secondly, it is high time that a complete study of Jewish Middletown be undertaken. What I have to say is based on seven years rabbinical experience in Pennsylvania where I had intimate contact with two Jewish communities, each with a Jewish population of approximately 1200. During this period I had also more casual contacts with many other communities in the 2,000 or less category and opportunity to exchange experiences with colleagues and numerous field workers, all of which might be added to my credentials.

I should like to point out certain impressions of Jewish Middletown with the hope that some day a more adequate picture can be drawn.

Organization of Jewish Middletown

Jewish Middletown has anywhere from one to three permanent congregations. Oftentimes there may be a community center building operated independently with but limited facilities. Usually the center and synagogues compete for funds and attention. In the smaller Jewish Middletown there may be an Orthodox and Reform group; in the larger ones there is also a Conservative congregation. As to organizations, there are as many as the traffic will bear. Each national organization has tried at some time to set up a local chapter. Its success and continued existence depend on the particular background of the community and the local leadership.

What are the elements of strength and weakness in Jewish Middletown? The percentage of affiliation in these communities is always much higher than in the large communities. Thus, synagogue affiliation or affiliation with the Zionist organization or B'nai B'rith may encompass as high as 80 or 90 per cent of the eligible members of the community. Synagogue affiliation may run extraordinarily high with 90 per cent of the community belonging to at least one of the community's congregations and a number belonging to two or more.

The United Jewish Appeal, when properly organized, can easily obtain a master list of the entire Jewish population, and the number of pledges made indicates that at least 95 per cent of the community participate. If the percentage of affiliation and giving in large communities were as high as it is in Jewish Middletown, what enormous strength would be added to our synagogues, our national organizations, and the United Jewish Appeal.

In Jewish Middletown it is possible for the leadership to keep its fingers on the pulse of the community; a certain amount of social control or pressure can be brought to bear. Hence, when a man refuses to give to the United Jewish Appeal or Welfare Fund, that fact is soon known to the entire community. If he gives a paltry amount and is known to

be a person of means, that too is soon discovered. Contrast this situation with that in a city like New York or Chicago where one can slam the door in the face of the campaign worker or give a trifling sum and let it go at that. A city like Johnstown, Pennsylvania, (Jewish population 1,100), is certainly not a wealthier community than New York City, yet Johnstown's contribution to the U.J.A. in recent years averaged $37.00 per person. If the average giving in the greater New York area with its two and a half million Jews were on the same level as it is in Jewish Middletown, neither the United Jewish Appeal nor any other institution would have financial worries. If the percentage of affiliation were the same in large centers as it is in Jewish Middletown, national Jewish organizations would not have to worry about their numerical strength.

In the smaller Jewish community, where the Jews are but one percent or less of the total population, the individual Jew feels a greater need for some form of organized Jewish communal life. Thus, when a Jewish family from a large city moves to Jewish Middletown, often as not they learn for the first time about the workings of a synagogue, of B'nai B'rith, of a Sisterhood, and of Hadassah.

Education in Jewish Middletown

Jewish education in Middletown is neither better nor worse than it is in the large communities. Here again a larger percent of the children get some form of education. The Reform Temple has its Sunday School, the Orthodox and Conservative groups have both a Sunday School and a daily Hebrew School. The rabbi or the cantor-shohet carries most of the teaching load. There are difficulties in getting qualified Sunday School teachers. Qualified Hebrew teachers usually feel lonely in a community of this size and drift off in a year or two to larger communities. However, difficulty in finding qualified teaching personnel is not limited to Middletown only.

The problem of setting up a curriculum and having proper classes for a Hebrew School of twenty-five to seventy-five pupils with proper classification according to age and knowledge is not an easy one to solve. Likewise, the small Jewish communities encounter the difficulty of sustaining pupil interest in view of the fact that youngsters will go through three, four or five years of training with the same classmates and the same teacher. The National Council for Jewish Education and other similar Jewish organizations ought to study the problems of the small town Hebrew School. Effort in this direction would be amply rewarded by the results.

Kashrut in Jewish Middletown

Jewish Middletown usually has a *shohet* or is near enough to a large community to make this unnecessary. Likewise, there are one or more kosher butcher shops. Already, however, there is evidence that the percentage of Jews who buy kosher meat is steadily dropping. The kosher butcher in Middletown complains that he cannot make a living from the amount of business available. I know of one community where the Jewish population figures have remained more or less static and where the *shohet,* who has been with the community for over thirty years, can give convincing statistics as to the observance of *kashrut* during his early years in the community and during the present period.

When communal affairs are given in Jewish Middletown, an attempt is made to keep them "as *kosher* as possible." This means a fish dinner at a hotel or that the Sisterhood of the Orthodox congregation does the cooking, using the vestry of the synagogue. Jewish Middletown does not have *kosher* caterers.

Relations with Non-Jews

Since the Jews are a small part of the population, the question of social mingling between Jewish and Christian youth becomes a difficult problem for Jewish parents who fear the possibility of intermarriage. What about the attendance of Jewish youth at Christmas parties? Shall the Jewish girl stay home from high school dances, if she does not have a date with one of the very few available Jewish boys? What if Johnny Smith, her next door neighbor, with whom she has gone through ten or twelve years of public school, asks to take her to the senior prom? Jews living in large communities cannot appreciate the problem of Jewish parents in small communities when it comes to dates, parties, and social affairs for the youth.

Jews in Middletown are usually invited to join the service clubs such as Rotary, Kiwanis, or Lions, and find an interest in Masonry. Country clubs are a different matter. Only a few Jews in each community make the grade. The Jewish community as such carries its full share of civic and humanitarian endeavor. In Community Chest, Red Cross, and social agencies the local rabbi or other leaders play a prominent role. The relationship with the clergy of the community is cordial and friendly.

The Relation of Middletown to the Larger Jewish Communities

Whether or not there are regional differences in the matter of Jewish community survival is something that I am not qualified to discuss. It seems to me that the nearer a Middletown is to a large Jewish community, the better the chances for Jewish survival. Whether small isolated communities in the West and South will disappear more quickly than those on the Eastern seaboard is a debatable question. One thing is certain, it seems to me, namely, that Jewish Middletown takes its cue from the larger communities and sets its pattern, its values, and its styles accordingly. Certainly Jewish Middletown needs guidance and active help from the national Jewish organizations.

The Future of Jewish Middletown

My impression is that as far as numbers go, the Jewish population of Middletown is now static. There is an economic factor that may upset this picture. If the big chain stores and big business spread their power, the small Jewish businessman or entrepreneur will be forced to go into still smaller communities. I feel that there will be an economic decentralization forced on Jews, which will help strengthen Jewish Middletown during the next generation. That is, more and more Jews from large centers will be forced, for economic reasons, to make their living in very small communities. If this prediction comes true, it will add numbers and strength to Jewish community life in Middletown.

It should also be mentioned that the coming of the Jewish Welfare Board-USO Clubs to many small communities in the South and West during this war period has served to fan into flame the smoldering coals of a weak Jewish community life. In some instances Jewish chaplains or Jewish Welfare Board workers organized small Sunday Schools and even Hebrew Schools for the first time in the history of the community. Jewish Welfare Board committees were set up and function in all small communities surrounding army camps. Civilians now attend services regularly at army chapels, this being the only religious service available to them. Will there be a carry-over and lasting influence in the post-war years?

Many Jewish soldiers who grew up in the Bronx or Brooklyn and were certain that civilization ended on the west bank

of the Hudson River have now discovered that life in smaller communities is not so bad. "We wouldn't mind settling here after the war," they are even heard to say. How will the half million Jewish youth now in Service redistribute itself upon demobilization? Will Jewish Middletown gain or lose thereby?

I believe there is a definite pattern already emerging for the Jewish Middletown of America. Eventually there will be but one synagogue with a community center attached to it. The ritual will be along Conservative lines. As the younger generation grows up, the bandying of such names as *Deitch, Litvak* and *Galitzyaner* will be a part of the forgotten past. Of course, there will be certain vested interests that will oppose the merging of all elements into one united Jewish community. The formation of Jewish Community Councils is a first step in the direction of unity. Given the proper leadership, it is easier to form a Community Council of Middletown Jewry than of a large Jewish community.

I firmly believe that a united Jewish community could retain adequate and well trained personnel to look after all its varied needs and interests. Certainly one large Sunday school or one large Hebrew school with two well trained teachers and with proper classification is better than two small schools with four poorly trained teachers.

In the Jewish Middletown of the future, differences will be maintained along social and economic rather than along religious lines.

I do not belive that Dr. Elbogen's statement, "In the United States the process of levling down *begins* in the small cities," is true. To paraphrase a well known saying — the small cities are just like the large cities only more so. Jewish Middletown has many elements of strength. If we bestir ourselves to set forth and implement the program of the Reconstructionist movement, we can yet make Jewish Middletown the reservoir from which American Jewry can draw great strength.

O. T. for the Jewish Jitters

By ARMOND E. COHEN

IN recent years, the medical profession has seen an alarming increase in depression psychoses. The degrees of the illness vary from what is called mild depression to the state which leads to suicide. The psychoanalyst alone is able to determine the cause of depression, and frequently he is of little avail because a proper procedure in psychoanalysis may require a year or two. Severe depression cases need immediate treatment if they are to be saved. Few scientists will risk speculating on the cause for increase in the incidence of depression cases in recent years. The reason most commonly advanced is that the war and its related problems have made life very difficult for some people to face. The circumstances of life have baffled and confused the individual, until he is convinced of his inadequacy in meeting the situations that confront him. The typical symptoms of a depression are constant belittling of one's self and abnormal self-criticism and self-deprecation. Once these symptoms become evident, the victim of the disease loses all self confidence and assurance. All of life becomes gloomy and ugly, until the patient ultimately seeks escape from a hopeless situation through death.

Fortunately during the last few years, an effective psychological treatment has been found for sufferers from depression.

The treatment is called occupational therapy, or, by its initials, O. T. A depressed person is guided to perform simple tasks which he can master. The treatment begins by playing simple games, weaving, knitting, woodworking and other handicrafts. Through his successful achievements, the depressed person gradually gains confidence in himself, a normal pride, a feeling of competence and a desire to live and contribute.

Diagnosing the Anti-Semitism Psychosis

A good many Jews are today suffering from an anti-Semitism psychosis which has given them depression-jitters. The widespread persecution of world Jewry, the strong undercurrent of anti-Semitism in the United States, and the general feeling that its intensity will increase after the war, the professional and business frustrations which Jews experience as a result of anti-Semitism—all these factors have given increasing numbers of Jews the jitters. The fact that civic defense agencies today make the strongest appeal to Jewish community leadership is evidence of the primary concern in the minds of many Jews. Groups of Jews are constantly meeting to "think through the problem of anti-Semitism and how to face it. How shall we prepare our children for the rebuffs they will meet? How shall we get rid of feeling uncomfortable in the presence of gentiles? What can we do to strengthen our personalities against the impact of anti-Semitic experiences?"

If this sort of self-analysis and self-investigation continues, its inevitable result will be that many more Jews will eventually suffer from a depression psychosis induced by anti-Semitic experiences. It is the symptom of oncoming personality disintegration for community leaders to spend their time asking, "What's wrong with us? Why don't people like us? Why am I a scourge to the world? How can I protect my poor child from his future?" People who speak this way imply that there is something wrong with themselves, and their very introspection increases the feeling of inadequacy, incompetence, shame and uselessness. In individual cases of depression, the next step is generally an attempted suicide. In the case of the Jewish people, the equivalent of suicide is assimilation.

The Treatment of the Disease

We Jews might be doing wisely to apply the methods of occupational therapy to the cure of Jews whose normal healthy self-respect and self-confidence have been shattered by anti-Semitism. Jewish sufferers from this malady need to regain their Jewish self-confidence and self-esteem, a sense of the worthwhileness of being a Jew and faith in the potentialities of Jewish group life. Here again, drawing from the experiences of the general treatment of depression cases, the proper technique would be to direct Jewish sufferers to simple tasks of Jewish significance which they can accomplish. Greater participation in synagogue activities, Zionism, and Jewish community life would be a healthy step in a right direction. Frequently it is found that the chief sufferers from this anti-Semitism psychosis are Jewish community leaders who are leaders by virtue of their position in the business or professional world or because of their personal wealth and social status, not as a result of their having come up through the ranks of Jewish community organizations. They are frequently people whose only contact with the community is their association with central community organizations. They are far removed from the throbbing pulse of local Jewish community affairs. Such sufferers should be directed toward participation in the institutions and activities of the Jewish community.

Another means of giving a sense of adequacy and proper self-appreciation to depressed Jews is to direct them toward elementary Jewish education. By and large, and with infrequent exceptions, the leaders of the positive creative forces in contemporary Jewish life are Jews who are equipped with a fairly intensive Jewish education. Leaders in Zionism, the Jewish National Fund, the Orthodox and Conservative synagogue, the field of Jewish education are usually laymen who at some time in their lives attended the heder, or talmud torah, or yeshivah. They like being Jews. Their activities are an extension of a rich Jewish home life, and they associate themselves with the great movements and figures of the Jewish past they know something about. Sometimes this sense of Jewish self-appreciation exceeds reasonable bounds, and occasionally a layman here and there displays exhibitionist tendencies in his Jewish self-pride. It is interesting to observe that the rabbinate has justifiably been charged with dominating almost every positive Jewish movement, but never has been accused of leadership in civic defense agencies. The fact that rabbis, for the most part, have a better Jewish education than laymen may be an explanation of this phenomenon.

Jewish education is perhaps the soundest instrument of occupational therapy for Jews who are abnormally obsessed with the fear of anti-Semitism. As they study the Bible, they will find out what kind of people we Jews really were. As they learn of Jewish history, they will discover what a remarkable people we Jews became. As they begin to associate with their fellow Jews over the whole world through an acquaintance with contemporary Jewish affairs, they will finally see what a courageous and undaunted people we are today. As they discover who "we" are, such Jews will inevitably begin to think of what they can come to mean to their people.

Some Don'ts in the Treatment Of Jittery Jews

The first step of the psychoanalyst who treats the depression case is to caution those who are part of the depressed person's immediate environment against serious blunders in one's relationship to the patient, blunders which can prove fatal. Those who have depression jitters are not helped by such advice as "There is nothing wrong with you. Forget the whole thing. You are as well as I am. You are just imagining that you are sick." Such advice leads the patient to the conclusion that his plight is even worse than he had thought, for, obviously, no one understands him and no one believes him. He, therefore, withdraws more deeply into himself and his troubles and his depression is aggravated.

Similarly, those who enjoy a good emotional and mental attitude towards their Jewishness and who face the challenge to Jewish living and creativity eagerly, must be cautioned against deliberate neglect, ridicule or abuse in their relationships with depressed Jews. It is merciless to adopt an attitude of smug superiority. On the contrary, it is a religious duty to be genuinely understanding and sympathetic and helpful. It is a moral responsibility for the healthy to take the ailing brothers by the hand and carefully to lead them up from the valley of despair.

Book Notes

A Poet's Religious Interpretation of AMERICA

MY COUNTRY, by Russell W. Davenport, Simon & Shuster, 1944.

AS a campaign manager, Mr. Davenport is a gifted poet. Who knows how Mr. Willkie might have fared in 1940 if he had been represented not by a sensitive seeker after God but by a hard boiled politician? But the 1940 campaign is long since over, and Mr. Willkie, alas, is dead; and speculation rarely pays anyhow. But of one thing we may be certain: Mr. Davenport is on sure ground when he takes pen in hand.

For this full-length poem of America is eloquent, powerful and moving. The poet's conception of America lives up to the noblest dreams of Whitman and Emerson. It is rich in love and pride, but equally in breadth of view and in high responsibility.

"Freedom it not to limit, but to share;
And freedom here is freedom everywhere."

But what is most interesting from the point of view of the religionist is Mr. Davenport's spirituality, his genuine religious sense and striving. The might of America, its magnificent strength impresses him — but at the same time fills his heart with fear, for the great power threatens to depersonalize America.

"There is this blind thing,
There is this thing grown
Out of us—this thing:
Thing of energy,
Thing of steel, of speed—
Blind—infinitely
Strong and swift and blind:
Not God's thing, . . .
Thing without soul—the
Dead thing living— . . .
The thing without breath
Without eyes without
Ears without sleep. . . .

The ancient iconoclast feared that men might worship idols, of whom he said: "Eyes have they but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not." This contemporary psalmist fears that men themselves may become mere animated idols, highly complicated automata. He fears the eclipse of personality, the crowning of Nothing.

"It is Nothing that we must fear; the thought of Nothing;
The sound of Nothing in our hearts like a hideous scream . . .
The belief in Nothing.
Here are the signs of Nothing and the portents,
Where the machines are, and their priests and their prophets:
Where the fire is, and only
Fire: and cinders and only cinders:
And the voices rising up from the cities, where
The people are—but only voices. . . ."

This is no groundless fear, for we have "found Nothing: we have seen it, have seen Nothing—the face of Nothing, we have heard Nothing, heard it rant, heard it proclaim the new order of hate, the

Godless order. . . ." The poet describes the price we have had to pay for Nothing, the boys who had to be sacrificed to it. Now we are pressed for a final decision. We must choose between Nothing—and God. ("See, I have set before thee this day, life and good and death and evil."—Deut.)

"The Spirit flows within us like a tide
Upon a nameless sea,
Pulled onward by some moon we cannot know
To inundate some shore that cannot be;
Some country out of mind, beyond surmise,
Beyond the reach of sine or ratio,
Or touch or taste or smell, or ears or eyes;
Some truth we cannot dream or analyze,
Forever hidden from intelligence,
Of which our will is yet the embryo.
We cannot hold this tide. It drives us on.
It drives us ever hence,
To war and devastation more intense
Where man will fight his own automaton;
Or else, to that which waits within his heart,
Still uncomposed in time, still unordained—
The brotherhood of man—the Oregon
Of freedom won by industry and art,
By science brought to life, by law maintained."

("Choose thou life.") Mr. Davenport pleads beautifully for us to choose life, painting a heart-warming picture of life lived by those who "dare to face the axiom of democracy."

THE HITLERIAD, by A. M. Klein, New Directions, 1944.

WHEN he is in the mood, Mr. Klein is Maurice Samuel in verse, if you know what I mean—and that is a high compliment indeed. His wit is devastating; he hates sham, pretense and the philosophy of brute force, and he loves the Jews with a deep love. Mr. Klein's poetry should be familiar to readers of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, the *Menorah Journal,* the *Jewish Frontier* and other periodicals, and, to Jewish readers generally, especially by virtue of his "Hath Not a Jew."

The Hitleriad is a delight. From its opening line, "Heil heavenly muse . . ." it warms the heart and tickles the mind, because it says, cleverly and bitterly, what all of us have been wanting to say, but have been unable to say because every time we start to say it we splutter. His sense of humor keeps him from boiling over every time he feels he must; instead he lets off steam with a brilliant crack, and goes on. The poem is wonderful for the man or woman who thinks the terrible ordeal is getting him down. Mr. Klein does not exactly take your mind off troubles, but you are bound to feel better after reading his sizzling sarcasm, his withering wit.

The main trouble in reviewing the *Hitleriad* is that one does not know where to begin quoting, it is all so quotable. But here are a few favorites, to whet the appetite.

(*Of Hitler*):
And let the world see that swastika stain,
That heart, where no blood is, but high-octane,
That little brain—
So that once seen the freak be known again!

(*Of Nordics*):
For through him, magnified,
Smallness comes to our ken—
The total bigness of
All little men.

(Of Goering):
A uniform for every pantomime,
Including asbestos for the Reichstag crime.
Goering, distinguished mainly by his size,
By the great girth's unrationed symmetries,
Ridiculous, in ersatz-land, sublime!
There was geheimrat who was not geheim!

IRA EISENSTEIN

Correspondence

THE CONSUMERS' SHARE IN THE HILLUL HASHEM

Sirs:

The *hillul hashem* perpetrated by the kosher butchers is exceeded only by the "blameless" buyers who make the OPA violations possible. The shame you heap on the butchers is wasted. Their attitude is that of many "normal" businessmen today. But what about the predatory, bragging consumer, who boasts that she (yes, I am afraid there are many she's concerned whose sons are fighting or perhaps dying) can get meat? ("You have to pay a little more—but you can get it.")

Such consumers sin against America, but they sin also against their neighbors who, because of observance of the law, are deprived of the enjoyment of meat saved for special customers.

Yes, the *hillul hashem* ascribed to the community of kosher meat users is truly shameful.

ABRAHAM KISCH
U. S. Army

RECONSTRUCTIONISM AND THE JEWISH CENTER

Sirs:

I have just received a letter from a reader of *The Reconstructionist* asking the following questions:

"The thing which bothers me is this: Where are the Reconstructionist synagogues? How can the Centers adopt the Reconstructionist philosophy and expect all of the other synagogues to encourage their children to be affiliated with the Center? If the Reconstructionist movement is to be carried out in Centers, as distinguished from synagogues, so that we have, in effect, a Reconstructionist Synagogue Center Building in which to house the two movements, what will happen as a result of the necessary conflict between that sort of an institution and all the other Jewish religious institutions in the community? What happens to the idea that the Center movement is supposed to be neutral as between the different Jewish religious concepts?"

I would deeply appreciate an answer to these questions.

JULIUS FLIGELMAN
Los Angeles, Calif.

Every new social movement faces the same problem of finding a place for itself in the dynamic set-up of society. It must either attempt to insinuate itself into existing social forms or try to clear an area for itself outside the already existing pattern. In urging the formation of Felowship Chapters, we have tried to take the former path. This would mean that there would not be any such thing as a Reconstructionist synagogue, except in the sense that an officially recognized Reform or Conservative synagogue would be of Reconstructionist tendencies, but not a member of an association coordinate in status to the Reform, Conservative, etc.

The Jewish Center should reflect Reconstructionism in two ways:

1. It should carry on all those activities which stress the totality of Jewish life, namely physical recreation, education, the arts, social service, civic education.

2. In addition, it should provide for the religious needs of its members. To be sure, no Center can afford, in its religious program, to conduct its activities entirely on Reconstructionist lines, to the exclusion of other religious expressions, if it seeks to serve the whole community.

Therefore, the answer to the second question is, the Centers should incorporate the Reconstructionist philosophy insofar as they deal with every phase of Jewish life and insofar as they give an opportunity for the distinctive religious interpretation of Reconstructionism.

The third question deals with the conflict between the Center and the synagogue. This conflict did not begin with Reconstructionism. It has been going on for some time, ever since syngagogues have enlarged the scope of their activities to include non-religious interests and Centers have expanded their program to include religious observances. This, however, is not a genuine conflict. Our purpose should be to affiliate so large a number of Jews, that there will be room for both types of institutions, the Synagogue Center and the Community Center which includes worship.

The Center should not be neutral on the issue of religion. Today, neutrality is synonymous with isolationism; and the Center should not isolate itself from the religious phase of Judaism. If necessary, it should be the home of multiple forms of religious observance and those interested in Reform or Orthodoxy should feel free to carry on their form of religious life alongside of the Reconstructionist. In other words, the Center should be the place where there is a free trade, so that all forms of religious expression may be able to compete and the most valid ones prevail.

EDITORS

THE "Y's" FOLLOW-UP OF ITS SURVEY OF TEEN-AGE OPINION

Sirs:

I have read in the issue of The Reconstructionist the reference which is made to the Survey which we conducted among our teen-age members. I know your article is based upon the one which appeared in The New York Times a little over a month ago. Because of your familiarity with and sympathy for the work of the Jewish Centers, I am writing you this comment.

In conducting this Survey we were concerned, in the first place, with finding out if our young people are doing any thinking concerning current problems. Secondly, if they were, what kind of thoughts did they have concerning the issues that are facing us today. The results, however, have not been taken as conclusive. We look upon these facts to give us direction for future programing. We, too, have been concerned by the attitude of our members towards refugees and the method of combating anti-Semitism.

I can assure you that the attitude which they expressed was not one which they imbibed in the "Y." However, we saw the responsibility and immediately launched upon an educational program with the result that we have already had several speakers here to address different groups of those young people who participated in the Survey. We have had speakers from the Anti-Defamation League and National Refugee Service, and expect to have others address other groups.

I am certain that should a similar survey be taken a little later on, after the educational program has had its effect, the results would be entirely different.

Samuel S. Solender
Executive Director, Young Men's and Women's Hebrew Association of Washington Heights, N. Y. C.

ON "CONGREGATIONAL IMPUDENCE"

Sirs:

I regret that I must disagree with your editorial entitled "Congregational Impudence." I believe that the blame should be distributed among three parties: 1) The congregation should not have publicly repudiated its rabbi. 2) The rabbi should have consulted the leaders of the congregation before dealing with this problem before the Board of Education. The direction of Jewish life—particularly in its relationship with the outside—should be conducted on a basis of partnership between the rabbi and his congregation. 3) The Rabbinical Assembly or the Synagogue Council should have on file a well considered decision on matters of this kind to guide the individual rabbi. It is not fair to place the burden altogether upon the individual rabbi — since problems of this kind are not peculiar to a particular community but are common to every community in America.

LEON SPITZ,
Rabbi, Congregation Beth Israel, Bristol, Conn.

Memo To Our Readers

Re: Mazel Tov

We should like, on our tenth anniversary (to be celebrated with the issuance of Vol. XI, No. 1), to present to the Board of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation which has been bearing the burden of the magazine, a purse in the name of the thousands of Reconstructionist readers whose appreciation has thus far been expressed in words.

Words like these:

From a well known author:

> Let me tell you once again what an amount of inspiration we owe to THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST. It is badly needed here in the deep South and certainly does its share in keeping up the morale of the home front while our boys are overseas.

From an officer in the United States Navy:

> I like your presentation of world affairs from a Jewish viewpoint, your column "Realities and Values" is both excellent journalism and excellent Judaism. Your commentary should be read by every thinking Jew.

From a subscriber:

> My son, a soldier in Normandy, has asked for THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST. He read a copy which his chaplain had received and was impressed with the articles and the point of view expressed in the magazine. Of course, as he says, right in the battle area it is not possible to conduct a study group, but he and many of his buddies are greatly interested in the Reconstructionist movement and want to keep in touch with its development. I thought you would be pleased at this reaction on the part of young men who have heretofore not been close to Judaism.

In honor of the 10th birthday, we should like to speak in terms of gifts to make up the annual deficit.
Won't you join in the celebration, and send us your Birthday Gift?

(We hope to list the Donors, with their consent, in our anniversary issue.)

JEWISH RECONSTRUCTIONIST FOUNDATION, Inc.
15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y.

I enclose a Birthday Gift, for the Tenth Anniversary celebration of THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST, of $.....

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